

March 2017 From the Board Room

North Carolina Public Schools

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Inbox

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From the Board Room

ACTIVITIES OF THE NC BOARD OF EDUCATION

MARCH 2017

The State Board of Education is comprised of the State Treasurer, the Lieutenant Governor and 11 citizens appointed by the Governor. This newsletter highlights the Board's activities on behalf of the 1.5 million public school students in our state and the more than 100,000 educators who provide services to children. You may view all State Board of Education member and advisor information [online](#). To access current and archived versions of From the Boardroom, visit the State Board of Education's [website](#).



Revised *English Language Arts Standards* Up for Action in April

State Board of Education members reviewed the [third draft](#) of revisions to the *English Language Arts Standards* in March in preparation for a vote in April. The revised standards will govern what students are expected to learn and be able to do in English language arts in each grade, K-12.

North Carolina reviews content standards for every subject taught in North Carolina schools on a regular basis. The latest revisions were made after gathering feedback from local school districts, from the Academic Standards Review Commission and from the public. The Data Review Committee and Writing Team were comprised of local English language arts teachers and others. These groups have been providing feedback and working on revisions since June 2016.

Revisions include a new format for the standards to provide more clarity to the standards, including glossary entries for terms. This change is designed to diminish confusion about what a standard means and to help English teachers statewide to have a common vocabulary. Other revisions expanded the description of the complete writing process, put more focus in some grades on grammar and usage

conventions, identified new handwriting standards in grade 2 to focus on cursive writing, and focused more on reading persistence and the ability to connect prior knowledge and experiences to informational (non-fiction) text.

Overall, 125 standards had a major change as described above, 45 had a minor change and 179 standards remained the same. Eight standards were removed, and one new standard was added. Sixty-seven standards had the examples removed with no other change

Standards Versus Curriculum – What’s the Difference?

Sometimes the terms standards and curriculum are used interchangeably, but English language arts staff working on the revised standards in that subject noted the distinction between standards and curriculum.

Standards are what students are expected to know and be able to do – the end result. Curriculum references the delivery system used to help students meet the standards. Curriculum could include student activities, books and digital resources, programs focused on particular subjects and the like.

Charter Applications to Receive Potential Second Review Under Process Changes

The State Board of Education approves charter school applications each year, and the NC Charter Schools Advisory Board (CSAB) has recommended adjustments to the current process.



A change in the procedure would provide for a further CSAB review of any charter that the Board initially votes to deny. A denial could occur on a State Board of Education’s second reading. All approvals or denials of charters would be completed by June or August (for those receiving a second CSAB review).

Mental Health Policy Discussion Continues

Board members continued to discuss school-based mental health policy [recommendations](#) brought to it by the North Carolina School Mental Health Initiative, a multi-disciplinary interagency partnership with broad representation from public educators, community-based mental health clinicians, lawyers, advocates, university faculty and parents.

The recommendations include creating a sustainable continuum of supports and services for student mental health and substance use that engages all stakeholders. Some potential implementation tactics include professional learning opportunities that promote awareness, prevention and early intervention; local policies that support a continuum of integrated services; and enhanced state and local capacity to prevent mental health issues, provide early intervention, and effectively refer, treat and transition students back to school through integrated service delivery models. Members continue to discuss this recommendation and options for implementing mental health support in school districts.

The NC School Mental Health Initiative's report noted that mental and behavioral wellness is directly linked to overall positive student achievement, school climate, high school graduation rates and the prevention of risky behaviors, disciplinary incidents and substance abuse. Youth suicides are up in North Carolina from 23 in 2010 to 46 in 2014, and 19 percent of students have some type of mental health disorder annually.



Multi-Tiered System of Support

Nearly all of North Carolina's 115 school districts and 50 charter schools have implemented the state's Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS), a multi-tiered framework that promotes school improvement through engaging, research-based academic and behavioral practices.

MTSS uses data-driven problem solving to maximize growth for all students. It is an approach to the early identification and support of students with learning and behavior needs. MTSS is both a rapid-response system to address student concerns, as well a way to examine the academic and behavioral practices for all students. MTSS includes ensuring all students receive quality instruction in all classrooms. The framework involves parents regarding student interventions and progress.

N.B. Mills Elementary School (Iredell-Statesville Schools) Principal Kim Mitchell presented to the Board regarding her school's experience in implementing the MTSS approach. She characterized the implementation as moving from being a "hamster on a wheel" to getting in front of discipline and making significant changes to allow the school staff to move away from always being in a reactive mode.

Mitchell said a key concept in implementation success is to approach it as a layered system with a differentiated core base, supplemental support for those who need it and intensive support for students who need that extra level of support. She noted the following key steps to implementation success:

- * Divide responsibilities among leadership. Create "owners" of specific steps.
- * Ensure program fidelity.
- * Incorporate staff training.
- * Hold weekly conversations in leadership, data analysis and next steps.
- * Note trends.
- * Create a systematic framework.
- * Balance both academic and behavioral components as equally important.

SBE Highlights: A [checklist](#) of Board actions is posted every month at the conclusion of the meeting. The State Board of Education's next meeting will be held April 5-6 in the 7th Floor Board Room, Education Building, 301 N. Wilmington Street, Raleigh, NC. Board materials will be available [online](#) by clicking on the Meetings tab.



Public Schools of North Carolina
State Board of Education
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